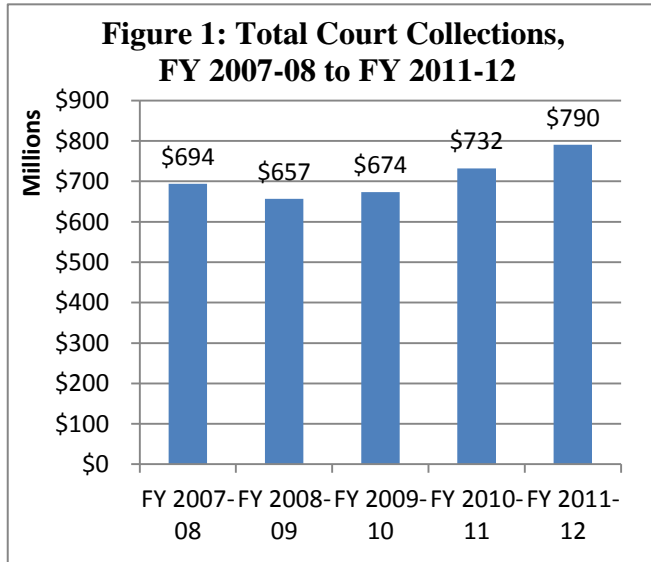


North Carolina Court Costs

North Carolina courts collect payment from offenders including fees, fines, forfeitures, and restitution, each of which has a specific purpose:

- **Fees** are the charges incurred for the use and support of the institutions of the courts. There are many different types of fees, as discussed below. Most fees are disbursed to the State, but some are distributed to county or municipal governments.
- **Fines** are the monetary penalty imposed for conviction of a crime or infraction and **forfeitures** are money or property that a judge orders a party to hand over to the State as the result of an unlawful act. Fines and forfeitures are disbursed to the county for the use of public schools.
- **Restitution** consists of court-ordered repayment to victims and other funds disbursed to private citizens.



The term “court costs” can refer to all of these funds together or any combination of components, particularly fees. It could also refer to the costs of operating North Carolina’s court system. Figure 1 shows the total court collections for the last five fiscal years.

Court Fees

Court fees are set in statute by the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA). Figure 2 shows current court fees as of December 1, 2012. These fees include:

- General Court of Justice (GCJ). Most of the GCJ Fee is directed to the General Fund for support of the General Court of Justice, which is another term for the State’s unified court system. There is a small portion of the GCJ Fee that the State passes through to the North Carolina State Bar. In FY 2011-12, the courts disbursed to the General Fund \$123.2 million from criminal GCJ Fees and \$36.4 million from civil GCJ Fees. The courts further passed \$3.2 million through to the NC State Bar.
- Facilities Fee. This fee is remitted to local governments for facility upkeep. In FY 2011-12, the courts remitted \$15.3 million to local governments from facility fees.
- Phone Systems Fee. This fee is for the Court Information Technology Fund, which the courts use to fund technology upkeep, including the phone systems. In FY 2011-12, the courts paid \$5.7 million in Phone Systems Fees to this fund.

Figure 2: Court Fees, 2013

	Criminal		Magistrate	Civil	
	District	Superior		District	Superior
General Court of Justice					
Criminal: G.S. 7A-304(a)(4)	\$129.50	\$154.50	\$80.00	\$130.00	\$180.00
Civil: G.S. 7A-305(a)(2)					
Facilities					
Criminal: G.S. 7A-304(a)(2)	\$12.00	\$30.00	\$12.00	\$16.00	\$16.00
Civil: G.S. 7A-305(a)(1)					
Phone Systems					
Criminal: G.S. 7A-304(a)(2a)	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00
Civil: G.S. 7A-305(a)(1a)					
Misdemeanant Confinement					
G.S. 7A-304(a)(2b)	\$18.00	-	-	-	-
LEO Retirement and Insurance					
G.S. 7A-304(a)(3)-(3a)	\$7.50	\$7.50	-	-	-
LEO Training and Certification					
G.S. 7A-304(a)(3b)	\$2.00	\$2.00	-	-	-
Chapter 20 Fee					
G.S. 7A-304(a)(4a)	\$10.00	\$10.00	-	-	-
DNA Fee					
G.S. 7A-304(a)(9)	\$2.00	\$2.00	-	-	-
Service Fee					
Criminal: G.S. 7A-304(a)(1)	\$5.00/service	\$5.00/service	\$30.00/service	\$30.00/service	\$30.00/service
Civil: G.S. 7A-311(a)(1)					

Fines and Forfeitures

Fines and forfeitures are paid to the county for the use of the public schools, as required by the North Carolina Constitution. In FY 2011-12, the courts paid \$4.2 million to the counties from fines and forfeitures.

Restitution

The payments distributed by the court to private citizens include restitution for victims, condemnation awards, civil judgments, and alimony, among others. In FY 2011-12, restitution for victims accounted for \$57.7 million from court costs, while the entire category of payments to citizens came to \$367.2 million. Figure 3 shows the court collection disbursements in FY 2011-12.

Figure 3: Court Collection Disbursements, FY 2011-12

